



# Eastern Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DIVISION | THE WORLD WE DEPEND ON DEPENDS ON US

## Helping Nature and People Thrive in Seven Unique Countries Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The turquoise waters of the Eastern Caribbean connect a chain of islands that boast vibrant coral reefs, stunning marine life and white sand beaches. Over half of the population lives within a mile from the coastline, and the majority depend on marine resources for their income. The Nature Conservancy currently works across seven Eastern Caribbean countries—Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines—to protect and enhance the harmony between nature and people. Working with partners and communities to strengthen a

unified network across the islands, the Conservancy is pioneering cutting-edge strategies for conservation and growing the capacity of the Eastern Caribbean people to preserve the natural beauty and resources of their islands.

### Conserving Marine and Coastal Environments

The Conservancy works with local governments and partners to identify priority sites for establishing new marine managed areas and to ensure new and existing protected areas are effectively managed. The Conservancy played an integral role in launching the

Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI), an unprecedented collaboration between 11 Caribbean countries committed to protecting 20% of their marine and coastal environments by 2020 and to establishing reliable funding to ensure the success of these conserved areas into the future. To date, four Eastern Caribbean countries have joined the CCI.

The Conservancy provides critical support to Eastern Caribbean countries to secure the funding, resources, data and management strategies needed to achieve their ambitious marine conservation goals. Five countries have established national



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conservation trust funds, with the help of the Conservancy and partners, which steer long-term funding to the most urgent conservation initiatives in each country. The Conservancy also works with governments on debt-for-nature swaps, a strategy that allows highly indebted countries to reenergize their economies and redirect resources to conservation initiatives.

**Coastal Resilience**

The Conservancy strives to make communities more resilient to a changing climate through innovative solutions that rely on nature and rigorous science to restore the natural protective features of coastal ecosystems. Coral reefs, for example, not only attract tourists but also protect coastal communities from the impacts of climate change, as their rocky architecture slows destructive wave energy and protects against flooding and severe erosion. Conservancy scientists installed



engineered reef structures in Grenada, using community labor and local materials, that reduce wave energy and protect the coast from storm impact, while hosting coral, fish and other species. This pilot project can serve as a model for protecting coastal communities around the Caribbean.

An essential step in rebuilding reef ecosystems is restoring corals, particularly the most important reef-building coral species in the Caribbean, Staghorn and Elkhorn coral. For 15 years, Conservancy scientists have developed techniques to grow vital Caribbean coral species in

secure, underwater coral nurseries and transplant them onto damaged reefs to rebuild a thriving ecosystem. The Conservancy helped establish Grenada’s first coral nurseries and trained local youths to maintain them, building both local expertise and employment opportunities.

Like reefs, mangroves also protect coastlines from flooding and erosion, as well as support fisheries production. The Conservancy is working with partners to train communities and governments to restore Ma’ Kôté, the largest mangrove forest in Saint Lucia and the Eastern Caribbean—in addition to planting mangrove seedlings to restore mangroves throughout other islands. For example, Grenville, a fishing community on the northeast coast of Grenada that has seen severe flooding and erosion, is also a primary focus for mangrove planting and restoration work. These efforts bring people together to protect their shared natural resources and create sustainable livelihood opportunities.

THIS PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM Pilot engineered reef structures, built with steel cages and filled with stones and cement, were installed in Grenville Bay, Grenada to protect a vulnerable coastline from strong wave action and the impacts from climate change, such as severe erosion. © Tim Calver; A coastal community in Dominica © Sean Southey



## CARIBBEAN DIVISION | EAST

### Cutting-edge Data

The Conservancy uses high-tech drones, cameras, satellite imagery and aerial mapping technologies to develop habitat maps of nearshore and coastal environments across multiple islands. For the first time ever, these islands have access to country-wide marine habitat maps, allowing them to more fully understand and monitor the condition of their marine environment, as well as select sites for protection. The Conservancy is a regional leader in both collecting advanced scientific data and making this data readily accessible through exceptional tools, such as interactive, online databases or the region's first-ever coral reef report cards. These tools uniquely incorporate social, economic, environmental and management data to empower communities in their conservation efforts and to improve how the Eastern Caribbean's breathtaking natural landscape is protected.

### Community Engagement

Throughout the Conservancy's work in the Eastern Caribbean, community involvement remains a top priority and strategy for building the local commitment of the people who call these islands home. The Conservancy and partners launched a series of inspiring campaigns to raise awareness of the need to protect and conserve the marine resources on which they depend. As part of the "This is Who We Are" campaign, each country hosted unique strategies, such as events, dance, art and music, that celebrated their communities' connection to the land and sea. In a truly unique approach to conservation, famous local artists from each country wrote original songs and recorded music videos calling on their communities to protect their marine resources.

The Conservancy also engages with fishers, protected area managers, scientists, community leaders and governments to

provide extensive mentorship and training in areas such as protected area monitoring, fisheries management and disaster preparedness. With over 20 projects focused on livelihoods across the region, the Conservancy supports small business entrepreneurs with big ideas about how to earn income from sustainably utilizing natural resources within protected areas. The Conservancy plays a critical role in helping people identify strategies that work best within their communities, take ownership over the protection of their environment and continue to benefit from the cultural, economic and environmental resources that nature provides.

By using innovative conservation solutions, efficient new technologies and the power of shared voices calling for conservation, the Conservancy helps nature and people thrive together in the Eastern Caribbean.

THIS PAGE LEFT TO RIGHT Grenadian coral gardeners outplant young Staghorn corals harvested from coral nurseries in Grand Anse, Grenada. © Tim Calver; Red mangrove seedlings to be planted in Ma' Kôté, the largest mangrove forest in Saint Lucia and the Eastern Caribbean © Tim Calver

## OUR MISSION: TO CONSERVE THE LANDS AND WATERS ON WHICH ALL LIFE DEPENDS



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